

voice, data, and video between them. The state Department of Administration runs the network, which connects government offices statewide over 14 nodes. In addition, according to the Department of Commerce, 42 percent of Missouri households have computers.

Despite this progress, there is still more to do. In terms of Internet usage, Missouri ranks 32nd out of the 50 states, with only 24.3 percent of households connected to the Internet in 1998. Clearly, it is in Missouri's interest to promote increased connectedness.

Across the nation, those who appreciate the power and opportunities inherent in the Internet continue to increase their involvement in the high-tech world. 60 percent of computer sales are being made to households that have already purchased a computer, demonstrating that these households recognize the importance of remaining current and up to date with their computer equipment. At the same time, only 40 percent of computer sales are being made to households purchasing a computer for the first time. If we want more Americans to experience the high-tech economy, we should encourage first time computer purchases and find ways to make computer ownership easier for families who are currently without.

According to Dr. Mark Dean, a specialist in advanced technology development for IBM, the solution to the digital divide is to put computers in as many homes as possible. Unfortunately, when employers have tried to help bridge this gap by providing their employees with computers and Internet access, the Internet Revenue Service has widened the digital divide by treating the new equipment as a "taxable event," or in other words, requiring the employee to pay income tax on the value of the computer.

Recently, the Ford Motor Company began a laudable effort to increase involvement of its employees in the high-tech economy. In February, Ford announced that it would give all of its 350,000 employees free computers for their homes. Ford is doing this because they recognize the value of having a workforce that is computer literate and internet savvy. Ford understands that in the digital economy, on-line workers are more productive workers—whatever their responsibilities are with the company.

Unfortunately, the IRS does not see things the same way. The IRS approach is to tax everything it can get its hands on, including the computers Ford is providing to employees to help bridge the digital divide. According to the IRS, the employees who receive these computers from their employer are liable for tax on the value of the computers.

Mr. President, this is wrong. When companies make the move to bring all of their employees into the 21st cen-

tury, the government should not make it harder on the workers to accept the technology by increasing their taxes. Ford's employees should not be penalized for having an employer that understands the importance of a computer-literate workforce. The fact is that computers are a vital business tool, for all employees, and Ford has demonstrated its understanding of this fact by providing these computers for every employee, from the newest worker to the CEO.

Ford's employees should not have to suffer as a result of the IRS's 19th century approach to tax policy. It is for this reason that my bill, the Bridging the Digital Divide Act of 2000, instructs the IRS not to treat computers provided to all employees by an employer as taxable income to the employee. This measure is in the interest of employees and employers alike. And because computers in the home will help increase our economic productivity and hence our output, we can expect that the long term impact of this provision will prove beneficial not just to workers and their families but to the nation's economy as well.

Mr. President, many politicians stand up and complain about the problem of the "digital divide." The Ford Motor Company has actually found a solution—a private sector solution—for its employees. The response of the government should be to thank Ford and encourage other companies to do what Ford has done—to take action that is in the best interest of its workers, not just for today, but for the future as well. But instead, the government response is to tax the recipients. I hope that other companies will follow Ford's example. By enacting this legislation, we may be making it possible for the private sector to help solve the digital divide, and will at least be ensuring that the government will not put the taxman in the way of the bridge-builders of the new economy. •

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 534

At the request of Mr. TORRICELLI, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to expand the powers of the Secretary of the Treasury to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and sale of firearms and ammunition, and to expand the jurisdiction of the Secretary to include firearm products and non-powder firearms.

S. 569

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain farm rental income from net earnings from self-employment if the taxpayer enters into a lease agreement relating to such income.

S. 1495

At the request of Mr. MACK, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1495, a bill to establish, wherever feasible, guidelines, recommendations, and regulations that promote the regulatory acceptance of new and revised toxicological tests that protect human and animal health and the environment while reducing, refining, or replacing animal tests and ensuring human safety and product effectiveness.

S. 1909

At the request of Mr. TORRICELLI, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1909, a bill to provide for the preparation of a Governmental report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgement of such injustices by the President.

S. 2084

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2084, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the amount of the charitable deduction allowable for contributions of food inventory, and for other purposes.

S. 2099

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2099, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require the registration of handguns, and for other purposes.

S. 2274

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2274, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide families and disabled children with the opportunity to purchase coverage under the medicaid program for such children.

S. 2297

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2297, a bill to reauthorize the Water Resources Research Act of 1984.

S. 2330

At the request of Mr. ROTH, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2330, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on telephone and other communication services.

S. 2419

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2419, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the annual

determination of the rate of the basic benefit of active duty educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 100

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. ABRAHAM), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), and the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 100, a concurrent resolution expressing support of Congress for a National Moment of Remembrance to be observed at 3:00 p.m. eastern standard time on each Memorial Day.

S. CON. RES. 113

At the request of Mr. MOYNIHAN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. TORRICELLI) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 113, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the free and fair elections in Burma and the urgent need to improve the democratic and human rights of the people of Burma.

S. RES. 304

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. ROTH) was added as a cosponsor of

S. Res. 304, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the development of educational programs on veterans' contributions to the country and the designation of the week that includes Veterans Day as "National Veterans Awareness Week" for the presentation of such educational programs.

#### ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2000

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the hour of 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 23. I further ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then begin a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator GRAMS, or his designee, from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.; Senator THOMAS, or his designee, from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; Senator DURBIN, or his designee, from 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess from the hours of 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy luncheons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER FOR RECORD TO REMAIN OPEN

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the RECORD remain open until 4 p.m. for the submission of statements by Members.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PROGRAM

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the Senate will be in a period for morning business until 11:30 tomorrow morning. Following morning business, it is hoped the Senate can begin consideration of S. 2536, the Agriculture appropriations bill. It is my intention to complete action on this important spending bill and the legislative appropriations bill, if it is available from the House. Senators can expect votes throughout the week.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:34 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, May 23, 2000, at 9:30 a.m.